

THE BUCKLEY MEETING HOUSE

When John Buckley married Patsy Casebolt about 1800, he built a house on the west side of the Greenbrier River. It was located just north of the mouth of Swago Creek and about two hundred feet back from the river's edge. At that time a few people had settled in the community, and they were invited to come to this house for worship.

As the community grew the house became too small to accommodate the crowds, and it was decided to build a church.

This building was located just south of the present Lower Church (Bethel). It was a log building and was large enough to accommodate a small congregation. This probably was built about 1825. This church was located on land donated by the Buckley family. The lot was about one-half acre in size. The lot was used as a cemetery for a long time and is still used for that purpose.

The church was known as "The Buckley Meeting House". The congregation was a member of the Methodist conference, and some of the ministers came from Hillsboro to hold services.

Joshua Buckley II, son of John, became a Methodist minister and preached at this church. He did not like the government of the Methodist church and joined the separation movement, which was to become the Methodist Protestant Church.

About 1875 the congregation became aware that the log church was too small to accommodate the congregation and that extensive repairs would have to be made before long. They decided to build a new church on the grounds of the log church. Most of the work on this church was done by local men without wages. The McNeill and Buckley families contributed most of the materials and labor. Jefferson Killingsworth was the chief foreman.

William McNeill and his brothers were good ax men. They chopped the trees for the frame, and John Buckley, who was good with the broad ax, finished the smoothing of the frame timbers.

Some other frame materials were cut on the Buckley farm at the head of the Thomas Hollow. This was fine poplar timber. The logs were hauled by oxen to the church site. This was done in April, and at one time the snow was so deep it worked through the ox bows.

These timbers were long enough to extend from one side of the church to the other. This is about twenty-four feet. One of these timbers when it dried split at one end. It then was necessary to bore a hole through it and insert a wooden pin.

The boards were cut on a "up and down" mill. This saw was like a crosscut saw and was worked up and down by water power. The finishings inside were done by hand planes.

This church is now known as Bethel and is being used by the Presbyterian congregation with the permission of the Buckley family. The lot when not used as a church ground reverts to the Buckley estate.